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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CODEL SHAYS - JORDAN

REF: STATE 223834

1. Because of recent terrorist attacks and attempted terrorist operations in Jordan (see para 8), the U.S. Government has urged all Americans to review the need for planned travel to Jordan. In addition, Embassy Amman requires U.S. government agencies and travelers to limit their official travel to Jordan to that which is essential.

2. Embassy Amman welcomes the December 18-19 visit of Codel Shays to Amman, Jordan, as requested reftel. Hotel reservations have been made at the Amman Marriott (tel 962-6-560-7607 or fax 962-6-567-0100) at a rate within per diem, with breakfast included. Note: no rooms were available for the above dates at the Four Seasons Hotel, requested reftel. End Note. Codel is requested to advise post ASAP as to its preferences for activities after Codel arrival in Jordan at 1500 on December 18 (e.g., a trip to the Iraq police training school outside of Amman).

3. Control officer for this visit will be Richard McCrensky, office 962-6-590-6225; mobile 962-79-582-0115; fax 962-6-592-7653, or email at McCrenskyRM3@state.gov. Embassy will provide airport expediter services and transportation to and from the hotel as required. The Embassy's after hours telephone number is 962-6-590-6500. Embassy will provide transportation and expediter services for each visitor as needed.

4. Valid visas are required for entry into Jordan. Embassy suggests visitors obtain their visas prior to arrival, as there can be delays for visa issuance at the airport.

5. Administrative guidelines:

Each visitor, regardless of length of stay, must have fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization, or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to the visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to, American and LES overtime (for such services as airport expediting, cashier accommodation exchange, control room staffing, representational event support), travel and per diem costs incurred by post personnel in support of visitor's field travel, rental of vehicles and other equipment, long distance telephone calls, office supplies, gasoline and other vehicle maintenance costs, departure tax, and other airport fees.

6. Health:

Although Jordan does not pose any particular health hazards for visitors, the quality of health care facilities is not up to U.S. or European standards, particularly outside of Amman. As medications on the local economy are often in short supply, visitors should bring sufficient medications to post for their chronic medical problems. Immunizations should be current for Tetanus and Diphtheria, Hepatitis A and B. Visitors should drink bottled water rather than tap water. Food in the hotels and most restaurants is safe to eat, but some of the smaller local restaurants do not always observe proper food handling procedures.

Only those personnel covered under the State Department's medical program and who have a valid medical clearance for Jordan are eligible for a medical evacuation at USG cost. All other visitors are advised to have their own medical evacuation insurance to cover evacuation by air ambulance. Otherwise it will be necessary to ensure that the respective agency will cover any costs related to a medical evacuation. All local hospitals take major credit cards.

7. Security clearance and building access:

In compliance with State Department regulations and Embassy policies, visitors requesting unescorted access to the Embassy compound should inform RSO Amman of their security clearance level (if any) and should name the agency that granted that clearance. Telegrams containing this information should include the "ASEC" tag to ensure distribution to the RSO.

Electronic devices: RSO approval must be obtained before Any electronic device is brought into the Embassy. Privately owned laptops and personal computers, peripherals, diskettes, and tapes are prohibited in all mission facilities.

Cellular/mobile phones and palm pilots are prohibited in CAA areas.

Travelers with USG-owned unclassified laptops or notebook computers, peripherals, diskettes, and tapes must receive RSO/IMO authorization before being granted access to U.S. Mission buildings. USG-owned classified computers must be sent to post via classified diplomatic pouch. Classified equipment must bear external USG bar-code inventory numbers and classification markings commensurate with the highest level of information processed on the system. Questions concerning other types of electronic devices and magnetic media may be directed to the RSO and IMO.

Mandatory personal security training: Per 04 STATE 66580, all employees traveling to post for 30 days or more (whether PCS or TDY) must have completed the mandatory personal security training (State Department Security Overseas Seminar or equivalent) before arriving at post. Agencies must provide the Chief of Mission with certification that this training will be completed prior to the employee's travel. Failure to do so will result in denial of country clearance.

18. Threat assessment:

In light of the November 9, 2005 terrorist attacks at three hotels in Amman, where 60 were killed and over 100 injured, the U.S. Government urges Americans to review the need for planned travel to Jordan. Americans in Jordan are urged to increase their vigilance when in public areas. The nature of these attacks demonstrates that terrorists may pursue softer targets such as public transportation, residential areas, and public areas where people congregate including major tourist sites, places of worship, restaurants, hotels, clubs, and shopping areas. Terrorist will often not distinguish between U.S. government personnel or private citizens. There has been a series of serious, confirmed terrorist threats and disrupted terrorist plots targeting U.S. interests in Jordan. Transnational terrorist groups, as well as less sophisticated local elements, have demonstrated the capability to pose threats here. The Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi (AMZ) network in particular continues to focus its terrorist activities against U.S. and Government of Jordan (GOJ) targets in Jordan. AMZ network appears to be responsible for the November 2005 hotel bombings, the August 2005 Aqaba rocket attacks, the April 2004 vehicle bomb plot to attack the U.S. Embassy and GOJ sites, and the assassination of American diplomat Larry Foley outside his Amman residence in October 2002.

In Jordan, anti-western sentiment is evident on occasion due to developments in the region, particularly those related to Israeli/Palestinian issues and to Iraq.

Crime is generally not a serious problem for travelers in Jordan, although pick pocketing and other petty theft is common in the downtown Amman Hashimiyah Square area and near the Roman amphitheater. In central and west Amman, thieves in motor vehicles have on occasion snatched purses from pedestrians. Several people have been injured when they were briefly dragged along the road. When carrying a purse, it would be wise to conceal it if possible, to avoid walking near the road within reach of passing vehicles, and to walk towards the flow of traffic.

19. Travel guidelines:

American citizens and official visitors traveling in Jordan should exercise caution, be alert, and stay informed of regional and local events that could quickly impact the security environment in the country. Travelers should avoid large crowds and demonstrations and take measures to avoid areas where they are most likely to occur (city centers, universities, refugee camps, and outside of mosques after Friday morning prayers), particularly during periods of increased tension. It is also recommended to maintain a low profile and not establish predictable patterns of movement, even if only visiting for a short period. Taxis are the only form of public transportation that is recommended.

As Jordan is a Muslim country, cultural sensitivities should be observed. Female travelers should dress conservatively and not travel alone, particularly in areas unaccustomed to western visitors. Incidents of sexual harassment, assault, and unwelcome advances of a sexual nature against western visitors and residents, although not frequent, have been reported. These incidents, while troubling, are not common.

For further information, see the State Department's Consular Information Sheet for Jordan at <http://travel.state.gov/jordan.html> and link from that site

to the most recent Public Announcement on Travel in the
Middle East and South Asia and the most recent Worldwide
Caution.
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